

മിസ്റ്റർ എം. രാമൻമേനോൻ : എപ്പോഴെങ്കിലും കൊടുക്കാം.

Mr. V. K. Krishnankutty (Ezhuvas-Trichur): May I know whether there was any enormous delay in the matter of disposal of these petitions?

Mr. M. Raman Menon (Commissioner of Excise): They require a detailed enquiry. But no delay is caused. These figures relate to the current year.

Mr. A. B. Salem (Mattancheri): Are not these licenses given free?

Mr. M. Raman Menon (Commissioner of Excise): Yes.

Mr. A. B. Salem (Mattancheri): Then, what is the difficulty in granting any number?

Mr. M. Raman Menon (Commissioner of Excise): If there are any *bona fide* applicants, their case will be considered.

മിസ്റ്റർ കെ. എസ്. പണിക്കർ : സർ, ഒരു വിട്ടിൽ ജേപ്പാർ പച്ചികളെ മെതു നണ്ടെങ്കിൽ അനജൻ സിറാ കഡി മെതുവാൻ ലൈസൻസ് കൊടുക്കുമോ?

Mr. President: I cannot allow hypothetical questions.

TUTICORIN SALT—INFERIORITY IN QUALITY

47. Mr. T. S. Ramachandra Ayyar (Chittur-Tattamangalam): Will the Government be pleased to state.—

(a) is it a fact that the salt supplied to the vendors from the Government Depot at Malippuram are of two kinds (one from Bombay and the other from Tuticorin);

(b) are the Government aware that there is a widespread complaint about the very bad quality of the Tuticorin salt;

(c) is it a fact that the vendors are compelled to purchase this salt also (according to a fixed ratio), when they give indents for salt;

(d) in view of the bad quality of the stuff, will the Government kindly discontinue the practice of getting down salt from Tuticorin;

(e) how many years is it since Government began this practice of getting down salt from Tuticorin?

Mr. M. Raman Menon (Commissioner of Excise):

(a) Yes.

(b) No.

- (c) Salt is issued to merchants from the depot at Malipuram in the proportion of 5/6 Bombay and 1/6 Tuticorin variety.
- (d) Does not arise in view of the fact that the quality of the stuff supplied is not bad.
- (e) From the year 1111 onwards.

Mr. T. S. Ramachandra Ayyar (*Chittur-Tattamangalam*): Are Government aware that when compared to Bombay salt, Tuticorin salt is definitely inferior in the matter of saline qualities?

Mr. M. Raman Menon (*Commissioner of Excise*): No.

Mr. A. Eachara Menon (*Chittur-Rural*): Do Government know that it requires $1\frac{1}{2}$ measures of Tuticorin salt where one measure of Bombay salt would be sufficient?

Mr. M. Raman Menon (*Commissioner of Excise*): I do not know whether the quality depends upon the measure.

Mr. V. K. Krishnankutty (*Ezhuvas-Trichur*): Are Government aware that before the year 1111 Bombay salt alone was supplied here?

Mr. M. Raman Menon (*Commissioner of Excise*): Yes.

Mr. V. K. Krishnankutty (*Ezhuvas-Trichur*): What is the reason for changing that practice?

Mr. M. Raman Menon (*Commissioner of Excise*): It is thought that it is risky to have one source of supply alone, because if that fails, Government will be put to difficulties.

Mr. V. K. Krishnankutty (*Ezhuvas-Trichur*): Was there any previous instance when the supply of Bombay salt has failed?

Mr. President: Not only failure of supply. If the Bombay contractors all combine and quote higher rates, then also we will be put to loss. As a matter of fact, now we have brought in competition. We have also given a contract to a Travancore contractor. By this Government are definitely gaining. It is better for us to have a free competition. Otherwise, the Bombay contractors would have taken advantage of the war conditions, and threatened us with the stoppage of supply, unless we paid them higher rates. But for the existence of the Tuticorin and Travancore supply, we would have been at their mercy.

Mr. T. S. Ramachandra Ayyar (*Chittur-Tattamangalam*): Do Government concede that the Tuticorin salt is definitely inferior to the Bombay salt?

Mr. M. Raman Menon (*Commissioner of Excise*): No; It is as good as the Bombay salt.

Mr. T. S. Ramachandra Ayyar (*Chittur-Tattamangalam*): Are Government aware that in the retail market both the varieties are sold at the same price?

Mr. M. Raman Menon (*Commissioner of Excise*): Yes.

Mr. T. S. Ramachandra Ayyar (*Chittur-Tattamangalam*): Are Government aware that there is widespread grievance among the people of Chittur taluk that this Tuticorin stuff is definitely inferior to the Bombay stuff and that where 1 *edangali* of the Bombay stuff is used, 1½ *edangalies* of the Tuticorin stuff will be necessary.

Mr. M. Raman Menon (*Commissioner of Excise*): The quality does not depend upon the measure.

Mr. T. S. Ramachandra Ayyar (*Chittur-Tattamangalam*): It is the poor people who are suffered by this. Will Government kindly conduct an enquiry to see whether the Tuticorin stuff is equally good as the Bombay stuff?

Mr. A. B. Salem (*Mattancheri*): Is there any difference in appearance?

Mr. M. Raman Menon (*Commissioner of Excise*): Bombay salt will have larger crystals.

Mr. President: As a matter of fact, it came out as a result of an enquiry conducted by the Government of India that in the salt pan, the upper layer is pure white. Then the second layer is less pure, and the lowest layer contains some mud. When the makers of the salt were asked with regard to the disposal of these various qualities, what exactly they did with the lowest quality, they said they were selling it in Malabar and Cochin State (*Laughter*).

Mr. K. S. Panicker (*Ezhuvas-Mukundapuram*): If the Bombay quality contains mud, the Tuticorin variety contains some sand.

Mr. K. R. Viswambharan (*Ezhuvas-Talappalli*): May I know whether comparative merits of these varieties have been examined by any expert?

Mr. M. Raman Menon (*Commissioner of Excise*): Yes. Both these varieties were analysed in the Central Farm in 1935 and they found that the Tuticorin salt is as good as the Bombay salt.

Mr. A. B. Salem (*Mattancheri*): Have we rejected any salt for not being up to the standard quality?

Rama Varmha Tampuran (*Comptroller of Finance and Accounts*): Every consignment is separately looked into and passed, and sometimes they are rejected.

Mr. M. K. Devassy (Adur): Sir, In view of the representations made by the Hon'ble Member, Mr. Ramachandra Ayyar, will Government examine these varieties to see whether they are all up to the standard?

Mr. President: The Excise Commissioner was saying that he has put them to a scientific test.

Mr. M. K. Devassy (Adur): When was that done?

Mr. M. Raman Menon (Commissioner of Excise): In 1935.

Mr. M. K. Devassy (Adur): A number of years have passed since then so that now probably they may be supplying a different quantity.

Mr. President: You may make periodical tests of these salts.

Mr. M. Raman Menon (Commissioner of Excise): Yes, Sir.

Mr. A. B. Salem (Mattancheri): When supplies are actually made by the contractors, is any test made other than the test of merely looking at it?

Mr. M. Raman Menon (Commissioner of Excise): No. Only by looking at it.

Mr. A. B. Salem (Mattancheri): May I know who examines and passes this salt?

Mr. M. Raman Menon (Commissioner of Excise): The Commissioner of Excise.

Mr. A. B. Salem (Mattancheri): Was at any time any defect found out and the salt rejected?

Mr. M. Raman Menon (Commissioner of Excise): Yes.

Mr. A. B. Salem (Mattancheri): When was the last consignment rejected and what was the quantity rejected?

Mr. M. Raman Menon (Commissioner of Excise): I think it was at the time of Mr. Cherian that a consignment was rejected.

Mr. K. R. Viswambharan (Ezhuvas-Talappalli): Has the present Commissioner rejected any quantity as being not good?

Mr. M. Raman Menon (Commissioner of Excise): No.

Mr. A. Eachara Menon (Chittur-Rural): Why do Government insist on the merchants to take 1/6 of the Tuticorin variety?

Mr. President: Because of the propaganda by the Bombay merchants that the Tuticorin and the Travancore varieties are inferior. They frighten the people like that.

Mr. V. J. Mathai (Planters): Can't we manufacture our own salt?

Mr. President : That does not arise out of this.

Mr. T. S. Ramachandra Ayyar (Chittur-Tattamangalam) : There is a variety of salt called the Thamarakulam salt coming from Travancore. This Travancore salt and the Tuticorin salt absorb more water than the Bombay salt. That is the information of the people there. I request, therefore, that these varieties should be subjected to chemical examination.

Mr. President : At the time of calling of tenders, samples are supplied by every contractor. It is the duty of the Department then to test and see whether the sample supplied is of the standard quality that we can accept. That is the first condition. Then only the question of price comes. When that has been established, we take it is the duty of the Department to see that the quantity delivered is according to the samples. The Excise Commissioner said that a scientific examination was made. We cannot do anything more than that. If any complaint is actually made that the quality delivered is not according to the samples, then, certainly it will be a case for Government to interfere.

Mr. A. B. Salem (Mattancheri) : Is it difficult to examine every consignment when it comes and test it scientifically?

Mr. M. Raman Menon (Commissioner of Excise) : Very inconvenient.

Mr. M. K. Devassy (Adur) : What is the difficulty to make the test every time the supply is made?

Mr. President : Are you satisfied that the supplies are according to the samples?

Mr. M. Raman Menon (Commissioner of Excise) : Yes.

Mr. T. A. Ramachandra Ayyar (Nellayi) : Is there any difference in the weight of one measure of Bombay salt and one measure of Tuticorin salt?

Mr. M. Raman Menon (Commissioner of Excise) : I do not know.

Mr. T. S. Ramachandra Ayyar (Chittur-Tattamangalam) : Are the Government aware that whereas salt is sold at 12 *edangalies* a rupee in Chittur in the adjoining British territories it is sold at 16 and even 18 *edangalies* per rupee.

Mr. M. Raman Menon (Commissioner of Excise) : No.

Mr. T. S. Ramachandra Ayyar (Chittur-Tattamangalam) : Will the Government take it from me that there is such a difference in the price of salt in the two places?

Mr. President : That does not arise out of this question. It may be that the retail dealers are charging much more.

Mr. T. S. Ramachandra Ayyar (Chittur-Tattamangalam) : So, Government have not fixed the price ?

Mr. President : How can the question of price arise out this question ?

Mr. T. S. Ramachandra Ayyar (Chittur-Tattamangalam) : Will the Government kindly consider the desirability of not compelling merchants to take 1/6 Tuticorin salt ?

Mr. President : They have to do it, because the Bombay merchants have been carrying on insidious propaganda to dissuade the merchants from taking the Tuticorin salt.

Mr. V. J. Mathai (Planters) : Will the Government kindly note that there is dissatisfaction with regard to the supply of Tuticorin salt as is evident from questions from all sides of the House ?

Mr. M. K. Devassy (Adur) : May I know what is the interval between one supply and another ?

Mr. M. Raman Menon (Commissioner of Excise) : 2 years.

Mr. M. K. Devassy (Adur) : If that is so, what is the difficulty in testing it chemically ?

Mr. M. Raman Menon (Commissioner of Excise) : There will be different consignments in the same year.

Mr. M. K. Devassy (Adur) : Can I take it that there will be 3 or 4 supplies a year ?

Mr. M. Raman Menon (Commissioner of Excise) : That I cannot definitely say.

Rama Varmha Tampuran (Comptroller of Finance and Accounts) : The supply will be completed within three or four months. Every 10 days or 15 days a new consignment comes.

Mr. A. B. Salem (Mattancheri) : If it comes 6 or 7 times a year and if chemical examination does not cost much, it is the duty of the Government to see that the quality of salt supplied by the contractors is in accord with the sample.

Dr. A. R. Menon (Minister for Rural Development) : The salt is imported in bags. There will be a number of bags in one consignment so that it will be impossible to inspect each and every bag.

Mr. A. B. Salem (Mattancheri) : A bag may be examined at random; that is enough.

Mr. K. R. Viswambharan (*Ezhuvas-Talappalli*): Cannot our College laboratory undertake the analysis?

Rao Sahib I. N. Menon (*Director of Public Instruction*): The College laboratory can analyse. But it cannot undertake this work.

**RURAL DISPENSARIES—SUPPLY OF MEDICINES AT RATES
HIGHER THAN MARKET RATES**

48. Mr. E. Ikkanda Warriar (*Cheruthuruthi*): Will the Government be pleased to state whether it is not a fact that the prices at which medicines are supplied to the rural dispensaries in many cases are much higher than the prevailing market rates in the locality, and if so, the reasons for same?

Dr. T. Verghese (*Chief Medical Officer*): No such instance has been brought to the notice of Government. But there may be cheap quality medicines in some of the local markets. There may be also instances where merchants, who had got stock before the war, are in a position to sell at a lower rate than the Calcutta, Bombay or Madras rates. At present there is no fixed market rate for any drug due to the war conditions, and if any dealer quotes a lower price, it may be only for a very small quantity.

Mr. E. Ikkanda Warriar (*Cheruthuruthi*): The answer itself suggests the possibility of difference. Will the Government be pleased to look into the matter and have a comparative table prepared?

Dr. T. Verghese (*Chief Medical Officer*): We call for tenders and we entrust the supply to the lowest tenderer, consistent with quality. It is not possible to ascertain the rates from every shop.

Mr. E. Ikkanda Warriar (*Cheruthuruthi*): What happens Sir, is this. We have now raised the amount under supply of medicines; but, as a matter of fact, that does not benefit these dispensaries. There are certain medicines which could be had at a very cheap price.

Mr. E. Ikkanda Warriar (*Cheruthuruthi*): Will the Government be pleased to have a comparative table prepared of at least standard medicines?

Dr. T. Verghese (*Chief Medical Officer*): As a matter of fact, some of the medicines, as I have already said, are available cheaper in the local market. But those are medicines such as *Digitalis* and *Ergot* which are not at all good.